

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212085

FOLLOWING PARIS 25156 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS RABAT
NOUAKCHOTT TUNIS LONDON AUG 30, 1977 REPEATED O YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 25156

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, AG, FR

SUBJECT: ALGERIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS

REFS: A. ALGIERS 2170 B. ALGIERS 2182

1. OUR ASSESSMENT OF ALGERIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS SUB-
STANTIATES THAT OF EMBASSY ALGIERS IN REF A. FOR THE
SAME REASONS, WE ARE LESS IMPRESSED BY THE VIEWS OF
THE JOURNALIST QUOTING UNNAMED SENIOR FRENCH DIPLOMATS
AS REPORTED IN REF B. IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO FIND
DIPLOMATS CRITICAL, AT LEAST OFF THE RECORD, OF ASPECTS
OF THEIR GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICIES, PARTICULARLY IN
A RELATIONSHIP AS FULL OF HISTORY AND EMOTION AS THAT
BETWEEN ALGERIA AND FRANCE. GOF LONG TERM POLICY HAS
BEEN TO AVOID TAKING SIDES IN NORTH AFRICA, BUT ISSUES
SUCH AS SAHARA HAVE MADE THIS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, AND
ALGERIAN POLICIES HAVE NOT HELPED. FOR INSTANCE,
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MOROCCO HAS BEEN MORE COOPERATIVE IN ATTEMPTING TO
SOLVE ON-GOING DISAGREEMENTS SUCH AS COMPENSATION FOR
NATIONALIZED FRENCH PROPERTIES.

2. WE CERTAINLY CANNOT ACCEPT THE JOURNALIST'S
SIMPLISTIC VIEW THAT GOF'S PRO-MOROCCAN "TILT" RESULTS
FROM KING HASSAN HAVING BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL AT

WOOING GISCARD. BEFORE GISCARD'S ELECTION, FRANCO-ALGERIAN RELATIONS WERE USUALLY QUITE ROCKY ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO INDICATION OF POMPIDOU HAVING BEEN PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO HASSAN'S CHARM. WHILE A VICTORY OF THE LEFT IN NEXT YEAR'S FRENCH ELECTIONS MIGHT LEAD TO AN INITIAL LOVE-FEST WITH ALGERIA, THE HARD CORE OF APPARENTLY INSOLUABLE PROBLEMS IN ALGERIAN/FRENCH RELATIONS WILL PERSIST, AND IN THE LONG RUN WE WOULD EXPECT THE RELATIONSHIP TO RESUME ITS ROCKY COURSE.

3. WE AGREE WITH REF A THAT SIX FRENCH PRISONERS OF POLIARIO REPRESENT MAJOR CURRENT IRRITANTS IN RELATIONSHIP. FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD, IN AUGUST 9 RADIO INTERVIEW, SAID HE HAD LEARNED PRISONERS WERE BEING HELD IN ALGERIA, AND CRITICIZED GOA ON THIS SCORE. QUAI NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST DIRECTOR CERLES TOLD EMBOFF (AND DCM ALGIERS) AUGUST 25 THAT GUIRINGAUD HAD THIS INFORMATION FROM FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFILKA VIA AN INTERMEDIARY. CERLES MADE IT CLEAR THAT FRANCE WAS NOT GOING TO RECOGNIZE THE POLISARIO IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RELEASE OF THESE PRISONERS -- AND THAT THIS IS PRICE ALGERIA IS DEMANDING. CERLES SAID HE WOULD BE VISITING ALGIERS SOON, BUT HE WAS NOT SANGUINE ABOUT BEING ABLE TO SOLVE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN WHAT HE CONSIDERED A FRICTION-FRAUGHT RELATIONSHIP. HARTMAN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER
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